

IMPRESSIONS OF PACHMARHI BIRDS

BY

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(*With 4 Plates*)

From Victoria Terminus onwards the eye of the traveller is attracted to large and glaring posters extolling the beauties of Pachmarhi, and one gathers from these same monstrosities that Pachmarhi is a golfers' paradise alone. The park-like links are undoubtedly beautiful, but not being a follower of the little white ball I had perforce to look around for other attractions, and they were indeed many—Bee-dam, Pathar-chatta, and Waters' Meet for the would-be channel swimmer; Monte Rosa, the crags of Dhupgarh, and many other khuds for the climber; rides galore and polo for the horseman; many miles of good roads for the motorist; and last, but not least, glorious walks through lovely woods and dales for those with no means of transport but their own feet.

The scenes and scenery conjured up in one's mind by the contemplation of this galaxy of pursuits led one to hope that one had struck a good spot for one's own particular failing, namely the photography of birds. Unfortunately not leave but the horrors of a combined course at the Small Arms School had brought us to this C. P. hill-station, and consequently from our arrival on April 9th, till the end of June one enjoyed little leisure for the indulgence of one's hobby. I could therefore do little beyond make daily notes of the birds I saw during the first three months of our stay and this was unfortunate as many birds to be found on the plateau were only breeding during those first days. The rains also commenced just at the end of the course—in these hills they are very heavy too—so, even when I was indulging in six weeks' privilege leave after my labours, I still had few opportunities of using my hiding tent.

In vol. xxviii, No. 2 of this journal is a most excellent list of the birds of Pachmarhi compiled by Mr. Osmaston, and this list I found of the greatest help. It contains 131 names, of which I noted 99, but of course a number of the remainder are purely winter visitors with which I had no hope of meeting. I did however come across nine other birds which are not down in his list. However I had better start at the beginning.

To my mind as far as the birds are concerned, Pachmarhi may be divided into three zones. There are of course no definite boundaries to these, though certain birds common in one zone are rare and occasionally even wanting in the others. These zones are namely the plateau and ridges on it, which are dry and waterless except in the monsoon; the ravines running down from the plateau which contain the perennial streams; and thirdly the higher hills which

surround the plateau and have a somewhat different flora. I intend to deal with the plateau birds to begin with, as these the visitor will probably strike first.

I arrived in Pachmarhi on April 9th, and it was not long before it struck me that, though the plateau undoubtedly teemed with bird-life, the number of species was not very great. At that time five birds, not counting house sparrows and mynas, were breeding freely, namely the Yellow-throated Sparrow, the Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, the Common Indian Bee-eater, the Indian Purple Sunbird, and the Small Minivet; the first and third in very large numbers.

The Yellow-throated Sparrows were in possession of the majority of the holes and crevices to be found in many of the trees, but their nesting is not of particular interest whereas that of the Nuthatch is. The first nest of the latter species I remarked was some thirty feet up in a cavity in a very large banyan tree. The cleft was more or less diamond-shaped, four or five inches long, and about three inches wide, and this the Nuthatch had cemented up until nothing remained but a very neat round hole. I shared the discovery of this nest with a tree-pie which had also been watching the antics of the little birds and flew to the hole to investigate just as one of them left. There were young ones in the nest as I could hear their shouts of hunger quite clearly from the ground. The Nuthatches' excellent architecture saved their offspring, as the tree-pie was quite unable to get even its head into the hole which I judged to be little more than an inch in diameter. These magpies are excessively common both on and below the plateau and must account for large numbers of eggs and young birds. It was not until after the end of June that I had time to search for tree-pies' nests however, and then I could only find abodes which were obviously finished with. Nuthatches are not very shy birds and will allow of observation at the nest. After the breeding season they are to be met with in parties, energetically flying from tree to tree searching trunk or branches, clambering either upwards or downwards, first on one side, then slithering round to the other. While feeding thus, they will often allow one to approach to within two or three yards. They are by no means silent, and one is always apprised of their whereabouts by a series of squeaks. By the end of May nidification is undoubtedly at an end.

Indian purple sunbirds are also very common and during April and May nesting is in full swing. On my way to parade—I had about a mile to go to reach the school—I used to pass no fewer than five nests. One was suspended from a rose-bush trained along the edge of the verandah, three were hanging from strands of lantana in deep ditches and one, about eight feet from the ground, was in a prickly bush of some sort overhanging the road and within a couple of feet of a not-at-home box. Three of these nests were destroyed while still holding eggs, in all probability by tree pies.

When first spotted, the one on the verandah already contained two eggs. This was April 10th. On the 21st I discovered that both eggs were hatched, and the young ones left the nest fourteen days

afterwards, i.e. on May 5th; one before breakfast, the other sometime during the course of the morning. The female was very tame indeed and did not mind coming to the nest even when I was leaning against the verandah rails but a yard distant, but the male's disposition was very different and I had to wait by the camera for over an hour to get one photograph, and this did not turn out as well as I hoped as just as I pressed the release he popped his head into the entrance hole.

On May 26th, a Sunbird's nest was started in a small tree opposite my bedroom door, possibly by the pair I have just been talking about. In vol. xxxi, No. 2, I described how a sunbird took no less than twenty-one days in which to build. This one was amazingly quick and though it built its nest in exactly the same way, that is, by completing a flimsy outer casing first, within six days the structure was finished. The outer shell was made in three days; i.e. the first day saw a stalk about two inches long; on the second this was lengthened and shaped into the upper half complete with the entrance hole; and the third saw it finished. On May 3rd, the female was sitting in real earnest, but a couple of days later the whole nest had disappeared.

The nests or rather nest holes of the common little Indian Bee-eaters are to be met with all over the plateau, in the sides of ditches, borrow-pits, ruts by the sides of the roads, and even in the level open glades, a mere raised clod of earth or slight hollow sufficing to give a start to the often slightly downward trending tunnel. They were nesting at any rate up to the beginning of the rains, that is up to the end of June, and I found them at it when I arrived in April, so their season is a fairly long one.

I had a peculiar experience with a nest of this species. I was seated at the edge of a slightly convex glade and kept noticing a bee-eater descending to the ground and disappearing from view just beyond the crest. On going to investigate, I found a hole in the side of a slight depression. In front of the hole and extending back from it for about two feet was strewn a considerable amount of freshly ejected sand. Amongst the sand were scattered three eggs, one of them almost buried. They were not even close together but lying about six inches apart. The only reason I can adduce for this peculiar state of affairs is that the bird for some reason or other, and probably a very good one too, was lengthening its nest-hole and had carried out the eggs whilst so employed.

The Small Minivet is a very common little bird and is usually to be seen in small flocks flying from tree-summit to tree-summit, though occasionally they come nearer to the ground to search for food in the lower bushes. As a rule the tiny camouflaged nest is placed high up across a branch or on a horizontal fork. I say as a rule, as of the five nests which I managed to spot, three were high up in peepul trees, one about twenty feet up on an outer branch of a mohwa, and the fifth not more than nine feet from the ground near the leafy extremity of a branch of a quite small tree at the edge of the classification range. The branch had a number of thickenings in it, which made the nest almost impossible to spot. In fact I would never have realized that it was there had not the



THE INDIAN PURPLE SUNBIRD
(*Leptocoma asiatica asiatica*)



THE NORTHERN GREEN BARBET
(*Thereiceryx zeylanicus caniceps*)

head and tail of the sitting female been easily visible sticking out on either side of the bough. This nest was discovered on May 5th. I rather think the nidification of these birds was over by the end of that month.

The other very common birds of the plateau are Indian House and Jungle Crows, Smaller White Scavenger Vultures, which are exceptionally tame and wander round about the bungalows as if they owned them, White-bellied Drongos, Southern Jungle Babblers, Hawk-Cuckoos, Grey Hornbills, Northern Green Barbets, Thick-billed Flower-peckers, and Large Indian Cuckoo-shrikes, the latter noisy blue-grey birds almost the size of a pigeon, with a rather massive black bill and black face and a rather heavy flight. They stick to the tops of the trees and seldom come near the ground. They also possess somewhat loud screaming calls.

Indian Rollers, Indian White-breasted Kingfishers, Northern Golden-backed Woodpeckers, Northern Indian Stone-chats, Central Indian Red-vented Bulbuls, Tailor-birds and Indian Magpie Robins are also pretty common, as are Indian Hoopoes, Crimson-breasted Barbets, and three kinds of Paroquets, namely the Western Blossom-headed and Rose-ringed Paroquets, and the Large Indian Paroquet, the last-named appearing to me by far the commonest of the three. Towards the end of our stay, i.e. in August, large numbers of the two latter invaded the station in search of the food afforded by the ripening of the fruit on certain of the large trees. The Brown-backed Indian Robin appeared to me to be rather scarce. There was one nest near the R. C. Church which was robbed of its young ones on May 20th, and one pair was always to be seen in the gardens. Only once did I see one elsewhere. The only really common dove is the Indian Spotted Dove, though the Indian Turtle Dove is also to be met with in the forests around. Indian Pipits are common in the open spaces and along the Wain-gunga right down to the lake and breed certainly up to the commencement of the rains.

I see I have mentioned neither Swallows nor Tits. Around the bridge and the Government Gardens numbers of Syke's Striated Swallows, and Dusky Crag-Martins are always to be seen. Where they breed I do not know, but there are of course hundreds of suitable sites in the rocks and cliffs around the plateau's edge. There are two kinds of tits, one of which, the Indian Grey Tit, is fairly scarce. The other is the Southern Yellow-cheeked Tit which is exceedingly numerous, and, with its large and rather untidy black crest and somewhat speckly plumage together with its oft repeated and distinctive notes, is sure to be very soon added to one's list of birds seen in Pachmarhi.

One Grey Tit's nest with young ones in it was all I found, as owing to the course I had not the time to hunt for them when the majority would be breeding, i.e. in April and May. The nest in question was in a hole in a very small sapling on the path to Jumboo Dip, just opposite the point where the small stream one strikes near the top turns through some boulders and falls into the main valley. The sapling was only about four inches thick and the entrance hole was so small that I would never have thought of its

holding a nest, had not I seen one of the birds go in. Before popping out the little thing put its head out of the hole for a look round, and the minuteness of the hole can be gauged by the fact that the bird's head appeared to fill it completely. The date of this discovery, by the way, was July 13th. Both these tits incidentally are birds both of the plateau and the ravines, possibly belonging more to the latter division.

Another bird of the ravine zone, of all three zones as a matter of fact, which is by no means uncommon in the woods on the plateau is Tickell's Blue Fly-catcher. This rather squat little fly-catcher, which is dark blue above, ferruginous and white below, possesses a metallic unmistakable short song of about half a dozen notes, the first half descending, the second half ascending, the scale, and to which it frequently gives vent. As I have said, it is found wherever there are trees, but perhaps its chief stronghold on the plateau is the Hogsback, where it is very common at the edges in the little nullahs which abound in that feature. This bird was breeding very freely in July, but I will describe my experiences with it when I get on to the ravine birds.

The Hogsback is a happy hunting ground, so I paid it a fair number of visits, and two birds, besides most of those which I have already mentioned, were nearly always to be seen along the summit of the ridge; one, the Common Wood-shrike; the other, Jerdon's Chloropsis. This Chloropsis is probably much more common than one would suspect, but they remain amongst the thick upper foliage of the trees with which their bright green plumage blends only too well. They are most excellent mimics however and this habit often gives them away. I stood below a tree on the Hogsback one morning listening to a pair practising. In subdued tones they were taking off a number of birds to perfection, especially the tree-pie, and really the only noticeable difference from the original was in the smaller volume of sound.

Southern Jungle Babblers were of course common on the Hogsback and I found three nests there, one containing four eggs including a Hawk-cuckoo's. In Pachmarhi the Common Hawk-cuckoo is a very common bird and its wild screaming crescendo call is to be heard almost any time during day or night. It is parasitic chiefly on the Jungle Babbler. The babbler's nest in question was in an outer fork of a small forest tree on the summit of the ridge. I discovered it on July 14. The cuckoo's egg was not difficult to distinguish from the others, as it was slightly larger, almost oval and of a slightly deeper shade of blue; in fact what I should call a deep turquoise blue. It was also not quite so glossy. The eggs were evidently quite fresh then as I visited the nest on two subsequent occasions during the next ten days and found it still in the same condition. On July 30th however the babbler was sitting over a young cuckoo, hatched some three or four days by the look of it. Of the bird's own eggs of young there was no sign whatsoever, not even on the ground beneath the nest. I searched the grass thoroughly but could not find even the trace of a broken egg or the remains of a newly hatched chick, so how the young murderer had disposed of its unwanted foster-brethren, I do not know. Of course



THE COMMON INDIAN HOUSE-CROW
(*Corvus splendens splendens*)



THE SMALLER WHITE SCAVENGER VULTURE
(*Neophron percnopterus ginginianus*)



THE COMMON HAWK-CUCKOO
(*Hierococyx varius*)



THE INDIAN MAGPIE ROBIN
(*Copsychus saularis saularis*)

there are plenty of vermin and ants, etc., always moving about these places, and all traces of the tragedy would soon be wiped out. On August 1st, although the cuckoo's body must have been about the same size as that of its forest parent it was still decidedly naked, though the feathers showed signs of sprouting, especially in a peculiar manner down the back. Even when I took the photos on August 5th, the centre of its back under the folded wings was still naked. I had no opportunity of seeing how long it actually remained in the nest—I put it back again after taking the photographs—as I left for Saugor two days later.

I only used the hiding tent on two occasions on the plateau, in order to obtain photos of the Northern Green Barbet and Indian Magpie Robin. The Green Barbet's nesting season seems to be rather a long one. They were going strong when we first went up, and even after I took the photographs of this bird I noticed others still occupied with young ones. The nest which produced the illustration here was found on July 3rd. I think the female was sitting but whether on eggs or young, I don't know. The hole was in a decayed tree trunk about fifteen feet high. Fortunately it was only about a quarter of a mile, if that, from the house, so to get the camera nearer to the level of the nest, I had a table carried out and on this I rigged up the tent. Not knowing the temperament of the birds I was to deal with, I took no risks—although the tree trunk was quite close to some servants' quarters—and camouflaged the whole thing pretty thoroughly. The table of course did not get one anything like up to the same level as the nest and the lens had still to be tilted up to a most fearsome-looking angle somewhere in the neighbourhood of 45°. Even so, I do not think the photos have suffered to any appreciable extent thereby. I remained in the hide for an hour and a half during which time the bird came on eight occasions, to begin with at intervals of about eight minutes or so, but later, I think owing to doubt as to the nature of the noise of the shutter, the time just about doubled itself. On each occasion figs, usually two, were brought from a peepul tree hard by. There were light clouds about which were just sufficient to destroy the deep shadows, but not to do away with the impression of sunlight, so I used exposures of $\frac{1}{50}$ sec. at *f.* 5.4, $\frac{1}{80}$ at *f.* 8, and $\frac{1}{25}$ sec. at *f.* 11. All five plates turned out very well indeed, *f.* 8 and $\frac{1}{80}$ sec. producing the best results. I was a bit late in pressing the release on one occasion, resulting in blurred wings as the bird spread them to take to flight.

The Magpie Robin's nest was near the base of a smallish tree quite close to the porch of another bungalow and consequently the photography of the bird ought not to have presented any difficulties as it was far from shy. As there were large young ones in the nest I was not able to wait for a break in the rains however, and in consequence the day I chose for operations was not quite as good as it might have been. One moment the sun would be shining, the next a pretty thick mist would be swirling by and occasionally a light drizzle fell. I have always found it most difficult to judge the condition of the light on such occasions, and consequently the negatives I got this time were not up to standard. This matter of

judging the light presents a greater difficulty than one would imagine. I remember on one occasion getting into the hide to try my luck with an Ashy Wren-Warbler. The day was certainly dull to start with, but when I left the hide I was amazed to find myself in a thick fog and a light so feeble that I knew, before I developed the plates, that they would be hopelessly under exposed, and so of course they were. For the Magpie Robin I used exposures of $\frac{1}{30}$ and $\frac{1}{25}$ at *f.* 5.4, and $\frac{1}{15}$ sec. at *f.* 11, but all the negatives show signs of under exposure.

I think I have now finished with the commoner birds of the plateau. Perhaps it might be of use to others to know that I missed an excellent opportunity of obtaining photographs of White-breasted Kingfishers through looking for their nests too late. In the bank of the nullah which runs between the Hogsback and Government House, on July 8th, I found a nesting hole, which judging by its damp condition and somewhat offensive odour, had only been vacated a very short time indeed. In fact the whole family was kicking up the most infernal noise in the trees close by. I was distinctly annoyed about this, as eight days previously I had been following this nullah down from its source and had turned off not fifty yards above this nest in order to watch the antics of a Tickell's Blue Fly-catcher. After this I hunted about in other places on the plateau in the hopes of finding a nest with young still in it, but I was unable to do so.

Besides the Northern Golden-backed Woodpecker there is one other bird of this family one is more than likely to fall in with, and this is the Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker. It is a small speckled bird not much bigger than a Copper-smith. Its nesting hole is also about the size of that bird's.

As regards birds of prey two are pretty common—leaving out kites and scavenger vultures of course—these being the Shikra and the White-eyed Buzzard-Eagle. The Buzzard-Eagle is a small hawk-like bird not so very much larger than a pigeon. Its colouration is rather patchy, the legs fairly long and yellow, but its chief characteristic is its habit of sitting on the ground, when it will often allow one to approach quite close before flying up into the nearest tree, or, if well in the open, flying off to alight again probably but a hundred yards or so away. Vultures also visit the plateau and of owls two are commonly heard, the second one being also visible by day on occasions, i.e. the Collared Scops Owl and the Jungle Owlet.

Wherever one goes one always finds a favourite and favoured spot where birds of many kinds may always be found and where, if one sits down quietly in a sheltered spot and merely looks around, one is always sure of observing something of interest. One such spot I discovered just above Bee-dam. The stream forks about a hundred yards or so above the pool, the main branch flowing from under the circle of high cliffs another couple of hundred yards higher up, which marks the exit of the strange underground portion of the stream; the other branch, which is almost waterless, coming from a small side nullah running up to the eastern end of Langee Hill. From the junction the stream should tumble over a small fall, but

the water has eaten its way into the soft sandstone and now goes through the centre of the rocks. There are here some very large trees and a considerable amount of overhanging cover, rendering the junction and the small horseshoe-shaped fall somewhat sombre though peaceful. It was here on a stone—not more than 15 yards from the short cut to the bathing pool incidentally—that I sat on a number of occasions and from where I watched many species typical of the ravine avifauna.

On my first visit I noticed a beautiful little nest of the Northern Indian Black-naped Fly-catcher stuck by its side to a single vertical strand of creeper hanging directly over the stream. It was a lovely little affair, not unlike that of the Fantail Fly-catcher in shape and mode of attachment but made chiefly of green moss instead of grass. It was empty when I found it and never contained eggs to my knowledge, though it had probably been robbed before I ever spotted it on July 8th. There was a pair of birds at the dam itself which I think had made this nest and had moved down stream a bit to try again. They were successful too, as on the 28th after an hour's search I found a young one which had obviously but recently left the nest. I never found this second nest incidentally though I had searched for it on three previous occasions. The parents were noisy and fussy, mobbing every crow which appeared anywhere near the place. Nevertheless they were very wary and careful not to give away the actual position of their home.

Three other fly-catchers were seen from my vantage point and all on this same day, namely the Grey-headed, the White-spotted Fantail, and Tickell's Blue Fly-catchers. On July 28th, a pair of the first-named were engaged in feeding two young ones, which had also been hatched out in the vicinity of the dam, the nest I think being fairly high up against the high cliff between the pool and the dhobi ghat. These energetic little birds have a few pleasant and somewhat loud call notes.

The nest of the Grey-headed Fly-catcher is by no means easy to find. It is a small structure of green moss often forming only half a circle placed against the side of a moss-covered trunk or rock, and is consequently almost indistinguishable from its surroundings. The only one I succeeded in finding, was a very lately vacated one on the path up Dhupgarh. I had actually looked over the very rock on a small ledge of which it was placed amongst some living moss which it watched perfectly. Every time I had gone up or down the path my topi must have almost touched it. On the occasion on which I did inspect this rock it had just been raining and everything was dripping wet, so perhaps I did not examine it quite as closely as I might have done. The birds themselves drew my attention to the locality by the way they fussed round about a tree on the opposite side of the path to this projecting boulder. It must then have contained young ones, as it was only a couple of days later that I found it empty while I was looking for a Tickell's Blue Fly-catcher's nest which turned out to be in a somewhat similar situation some 15 yards further up.

The Fantails, also a pair, did not, I think, possess a nest but were merely hunting about for food in their usual jerky energetic manner.

Of course as I had not got a camera with me one of them pirouetted about a bit of creeper not 4 feet from my head evidently quite unafraid of me. They are not uncommon in all the ravines and a pair had a nest on the path down to Waters' Meet which contained two eggs on July 16th. These eggs unfortunately were never hatched as the nest was empty a couple of days later.

The third pair of fly-catchers—Tickell's Blue Fly-catchers, was building on a small ledge protected by the foliage overhanging the left side of the fall. I could not get at the nest however, and it was not in a good position for photography. A few days previously I had tried conclusions with a pair of these birds a little higher up the stream. Almost at the head of the nullah is a deep pit some 20 or 30 feet across, at the bottom of which the stream disappears down a fissure in the rock to appear again from under the high cliff I have already mentioned. About two-thirds down this pot hole under an overhanging lip of earth and grass was a nest containing three half grown young ones. Fortunately for me near by there was a projecting ledge about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide down to which it was quite easy to get the hiding tent, though to erect it and to camouflage the outside was attended by considerable difficulty as the tent was as wide as the ledge and only a foot shorter. This shelf was above the level of the nesting site, so the immediate entrance to the nest was out of view of the lens, but one long strand of creeper ran diagonally across it, so on this I focussed the camera, confidently expecting that the bird would occasionally alight on it on its way to its young ones. However I was had on toast in exactly the same way as I was previously by a Nilgiri Blue Fly-catcher. The bird, in this instance the male, on most occasions flew straight into the nest and so disappeared completely from view each time it came. I therefore stuffed up the entrance with leaves and ferns and tried again. The bird must have come to the nest at least a dozen times, but only twice did it land on the creeper, the other times it hovered outside close to the obstruction like an enormous but unsteady bumble bee.

One of the two negatives is quite good but I am sorry to say quite useless, as it gives one an altogether erroneous impression of the bird's colouration. I was using Ilford Iso-Zenith plates on account of the darkness of the pot-hole. There was no sun, as it was blotted out by a light mist, so I could not have used either slower plates or light filters. The general colour of the upper parts of the male is a pretty dark blue, though from the tent it appeared almost black. Nevertheless the blue has affected the plates to such an extent that from the prints one would judge the bird to be dirty white.

On July 19th I found another nest, with three eggs in it. As it was in an ideal situation, being not more than two feet from the ground on a ledge of rock close to the bank of the other fork of the Bee stream and in a well-lighted spot, I decided to make another attempt using Ilford Auto-filter plates, but for some unaccountable reason the bird deserted the very next day. I do not think the fault was mine, as I never touched the nest and in fact did not even stop in front of it. Also on going away I saw both birds fly to the rock. I rather think the female must have been killed, as

I twice went to look at the site and saw the male alone on both occasions. Including old ones, I found about a dozen nests of this bird, only one of which was against a tree trunk, the remainder being in somewhat similar situations on ledges of rocks.

From my vantage point I also saw the following birds:— White-Eyes, Yellow-cheeked Tits, Green Barbets, and White-bellied Drongos, all of which are common everywhere with the exception perhaps of on the higher hill tops. On each occasion a pair of Black-crested Yellow Bulbuls and a pair of Malabar Whistling Thrushes came, and of course numbers of Tree-pies and Thick-billed Flower-peckers. I also once saw a Southern Red-Whiskered Bulbul. The Red-Whiskered Bulbul's stronghold is however Dhupgarh and they appear to be rare elsewhere. The Black-crested Yellow-Bulbul is also a somewhat rare bird which occurs only in the ravines. This handsome bulbul gives one the impression of being more a vivid green bird with a black top knot rather than being mostly yellow.

The Malabar Whistling Thrush is quite the most striking bird of the ravine avifauna. It does, it is true, frequently stray on to the plateau, but it is essentially a ravine bird haunting all the perennial streams. At the beginning of May its vocal powers develop and its meandering, painfully human whistling is certain to attract one's attention. On the first occasion that we visited Pathar-Chatta, just as we were dropping into the deep gorge near the bottom, a loud whistling suddenly broke out. I stopped dead, and in an aggrieved tone said to my wife 'some one is down before us' so human were the first few notes. Of course it was only our friend the whistling school-boy; the first one I had heard in Pachmarhi in full blast. In these hills the rocks and cliffs are seamed with crevices and drilled with holes and inside these the thrushes place their nests. The result is that they are hard to spot, and consequently I could only mark down one—on the Jumboo Dip stream—and this was inaccessible. I hunted the stream, the Beestream I mean, and it appendages from the source to the bottom of its exceptionally pretty falls about a mile below the dam but could not find a nest, though I am perfectly certain that two pairs had nests somewhere along its course. These falls incidentally are not mentioned in the guide book, though to my mind they are more worthy of a visit than all the others.

I nearly got a photo of one of these fine birds when I was operating upon the Blue Fly-catcher, as one landed in the pit and started feeding on a ledge in front of, but a little above, the tent. I slowly raised the lens, but found I could not get it quite high enough without moving the front flap of the tent. This of course alarmed it and it flew off. I have since provided the camera with a sort of tilting-table operated by a screw, which I find most useful.

There are of course a goodly number of other birds to be found in these ravines including jungle and spur fowl and certain members of the birds of prey, both diurnal and otherwise, and there are three small birds which I certainly ought to mention. One is the Common Indian Kingfisher which is fairly often to be met with, especially on the main Denwa river at such places as Pansy Pool and the other bathing places, and after the rains have